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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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UNCLAS COTONOU 000026

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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WHITE HOUSE FOR SPENCER GESSINGER AND MELISSA BENNETT
NSC FOR MARY HAINES
DEPARTMENT FOR A/EX/PTS CHRIS SZYMANSKI AND AF/W FOR DANA
BANKS
DAR ES SALAAM PLEASE PASS TO WHITE HOUSE PRE-ADVANCE TEAM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OVIP](#) [BUSH](#) [GEORGE](#) [BN](#)

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY GOB OFFICIALS FOR PRE-ADVANCE
TEAM'S SITE SURVEY, COTONOU, BENIN

1.(SBU) During the pre-advance team's site survey visit to Cotonou, Benin, January 19 - 20, 2008, key GOB contacts will be Ambassador Mariam Diallo, President Yayi's Special Advisor for Diplomatic Affairs; Ambassador Claude Fassinou, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) Director of Protocol; Mr. Eusebe Agbangla, the MFA's Acting Director of the Americas; and Captain Claude Zomahoun, second in command of President Boni Yayi's security detail. Ambassador Diallo leads the GOB team planning for President Bush's visit to Benin. Ambassador Fassinou coordinates the protocol aspects of a state visit. Mr. Agbangla will coordinate the policy aspects from the GOB's perspective, and Captain Zomahoun will have responsibility for security planning. Please find biographies of each of these GOB officials below.

Mariam Aladji Boni DIALLO (dee-AH-loh)

2.(U) Special Advisor for Diplomatic Affairs, Office of the President

Addressed as &Madame l,Ambassadeur8

Prior to her appointment as Special Advisor for Diplomatic Affairs at the Presidency in June 2007, Ambassador Diallo served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from April 2006) June 12007. Before her service as Minister, she was Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and African Integration, and previously was Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Benin in Bonn, Germany. Ambassador Diallo has traveled to the United States on official business on multiple occasions, particularly to attend various United Nations meetings and events, including the United Nations General Assembly in New York and the December 2006 visit to the White House for President Bush's meeting with President Yayi.

A diplomat by profession, Ambassador Diallo holds a doctorate in International Relations from the University of Yaounde in Cameroon. A widow, Ms. Diallo was born in 1953 and is a native of Kandi in the northeastern region of Benin.

Claude Reuben FASSINOU (fah-SEE-noo)

3.(U) Director of Protocol

Addressed as: "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur"

Ambassador Fassinou is 44 years old and a career diplomat. From 1991 to 2001, he served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Deputy Director of the Department of Programming and Planning (Direction de la Programmation et de la Prospective). From 2001 to 2004, he served as Counselor at the Embassy of Benin in South Africa in Pretoria. Since March 2004, Ambassador Fassinou has held the position of the Director of Protocol at the MFA. Ambassador Fassinou is unmarried and has no children.

Eusebe AGBANGLA (ah-BANG-la)

4.(U) Acting Director of the Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Addressed as "Monsieur Agbangla"

Mr. Agbangla has worked in the Americas Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since February 2006. Immediately prior to his present assignment, he was Director of Protocol for the President of the National Assembly. Mr. Agbangla also has served as a foreign policy advisor to the Minister of Development. He holds the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary in Benin's Foreign Service. Mr. Agbangla is 51 years old, married, and has 5 children.

Pamphile Claude ZOMAHOUN (ZO-mah-oo)

5.(U) Deputy Commander of the Republican Guard's Presidential Escort and Security Unit

Addressed as "Capitaine Zomahoun"

Mr. Zomahoun holds the rank of Captain in Benin's Gendarmerie. He is second-in-command of the Beninese Armed Forces unit which protects President Yayi. Captain Zomahoun has held his post since April 2006. Immediately prior to joining the President's security unit, he was the Operations Chief for the Beninese Armed Forces unit, which patrols the Benin-Niger frontier. Captain Zomahoun is 36 years old, married, and has two children.

BROWN